

Remarks

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-35 are allowed. The Examiner has also indicated that claims 37-40 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner has rejected claims 36 and 41 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Khandros et al., United States Patent No. 6,372,527, (hereinafter "Khandros").

Claims 1-41 were originally presented for Examination. Claim 42 has been added by way of the present Response. Claims 37-40 have been cancelled by way of the present Response. Claim 36 has been amended by way of the present Response. Claims 1-36 and 41-42 are currently pending, of which, claims 1, 18 and 36 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration of the present amendment as currently constituted is respectfully requested.

Regarding the Allowed and Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant greatly appreciates the indication by the Examiner that claims 1-35 are allowed. Further, Applicant greatly appreciates the indication that claims 37-40 are allowable. Applicant has amended claim 36 to include the limitations of claims 37-40.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 36 and 41 stand rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Khandros. Based upon the Examiner's remarks in the outstanding Office Action, Applicant has amended claim 36 to include the allowable subject matter of claims 37-40. Accordingly, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and allowance of claim 36 is respectfully requested.

Claim 41 depends from claim 36 and adds further limitations. Accordingly, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and allowance of claim 41 is respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claim 42 has been added by way of the present Response. Claim 42 is a product-by-process claim according to the method of claim 1. Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that in view of the foregoing remarks and allowance of claim 1, claim 42 is allowable.

Fee Statement

The total number of claims has decreased by way of the present Response. Additionally, the number of independent claims remains unchanged by way of the present Response. Applicant believes no fees are due for the filing of this Response. If any additional fees are due, however, please charge our deposit account (Account No. 03-1130).

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding objections and rejections and allow all claims presented herein. Accordingly, a favorable action in the form of an early notice of allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned for any reason that would advance the instant application to issue.

Dated this 30th day of April, 2004.

Respectfully submitted:



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